

Division 1: Prehospital Environment

Section 1. Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction	The EMT-Intermediate has a variety of duties. It is imperative that as a health care professional he/she understand his or her legal, moral and ethical responsibilities. These responsibilities occur during training and in the practice of patient care.
Overview	Section A. Medical Ethics and Professionalism Section B. Post-Graduation Responsibilities Appendix A
Objectives	<p>At the conclusion of Subsection 1, the instructor will have provided sufficient information, demonstration, and practice to the student to ensure his/her ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1 Identify and describe those activities performed by an EMT-Intermediate in the field. 1.1.2 Define the role of an EMT-Intermediate. 1.1.3 Describe and contrast the difference between an EMT-Ambulance and EMT-Intermediate training program. 1.1.4 Define the term "ethics" and "professionalism." 1.1.5 Describe the differences between ethical behavior and legal requirements. 1.1.6 State specific activities that are most appropriate to ethical behavior. 1.1.7 Identify whether a particular activity is unethical and/or illegal, given certain patient care situations. 1.1.8 Identify whether a particular activity is ethical or unethical given certain patient care situations. 1.1.9 Define the term "professional." 1.1.10 Define the term "health care professional." 1.1.11 Identify whether a particular activity is professional or unprofessional given certain patient care situations. 1.1.12 State certain activities that are most appropriate to professional behavior. 1.1.13 List current State requirements for EMT-Intermediate continuing education. 1.1.14 Define and discuss at least three reasons why continuing education is important for the EMT-Intermediate. 1.1.15 Define the terms certification/licensure/registration. 1.1.16 Name and describe current state legislation outlining the scope of prehospital advanced life support. 1.1.17 State the reason it is important to keep one's EMT-Intermediate certification current. 1.1.18 State the major purposes of a national association. 1.1.19 State the major purposes of a national registration agency. 1.1.20 State the major benefits of subscribing to professional journals. 1.1.21 State the benefits of EMT-Intermediates teaching in their community.

Medical Ethics and Professionalism**A. Introduction**

1. This section is one of the most important in the curriculum, not because of the medical information, but because of its long-term value post-graduation.
2. Even though much of this section is intangible, accepting and implementing these concepts into their professional lives will ultimately separate the excellent from the average EMT-I.

B. Ethics

1. Ethics are principles governing the conduct of an EMT-I. They deal with the relationship of an EMT-I to his or her patients, the patient's family the EMT-I's peers and society at large.
2. The word ethics comes from the Greek word meaning "character."
3. Ethics set standards of rightness and wrongness of human conduct, but do not address morality.
4. The Oath of Geneva, the EMT Oath, and the Code of Ethics for EMT's.
5. Examples relating to standing versus written orders, professional indiscretions, meeting the medical needs of patients who are unable to pay, and interactions with other members of the health care team.
6. Contrast ethical and unethical behavior versus legal requirements and/or illegal activities.
7. If EMT-I places the patient above all else when providing medical care, he or she will rarely have to worry about committing an unethical act.

C. Professionalism

1. A professional is a person who has certain special skills and knowledge in a specific area and conforms to the standards of conduct and performance in that area.
2. Professionalism in health care is necessary to:
 - a. Promote *quality* patient care
 - b. Instill pride in profession
 - c. Promote high standards
 - d. Earn respect of medical team
3. Examples of professional and unprofessional behavior based upon activities itemized in D1-7, below.

D. Role

1. Recognizing a medical emergency; assessing the situation; managing emergency care and, if needed, extrication; coordinating EMS efforts with those of other agencies that may be involved in the care and transportation of the patient; and establishing rapport with the patient and significant others to decrease their state of crisis.
2. Assigning priorities of emergency treatment and recording and communicating data to the designated medical command authority.
3. Initiating and continuing emergency medical care under medical control, including the recognition of presenting conditions and initiation of appropriate invasive and noninvasive treatments, e.g., surgical and medical emergencies, airway and respiration problems, cardiac problems and psychological crises; and assessing the response

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Explain the difference
between morality and ethics.

of the patient to that treatment and modifying medical therapy as required under the direction of a physician or other authorized personnel.

4. Exercising personal judgement in case of interruption in medical direction caused by communication failure or in cases of immediate life-threatening conditions. (Under these circumstances, provides such emergency care as has been specifically authorized in advance.)
5. Directing and coordinating transport of the patient by selecting the best available method(s) in conjunction with medical command authority.
6. Recording in writing or dictation details related to the patient's emergency care and the incident; and
7. Directing the maintenance and preparation of emergency care equipment and supplies.

E. EMT-A versus EMT-Intermediate versus EMT-Paramedic

1. An EMT-A (Basic) should have successfully completed the National Standard Training Course (NSTC) for Basic EMT's. He should be competent in all phases of Basic Life Support (BLS), including the pneumatic antishock garment.
2. An EMT-Intermediate should currently be a State or national certified EMT-A, have successfully completed the National Standard Training Course for EMT-I's, be competent and knowledgeable in all phases of BLS, including the pneumatic antishock garment (PASG), and in those phases of Advance Life Support (ALS) including Esophageal intubation device (EOA) or Esophageal gastric tube (EGTA) and intravenous therapy.
3. An EMT-I is defined under D above.

Post-Graduation Responsibilities

A. Introduction

1. Once graduated and practicing the EMT-I takes on a multitude of personal responsibilities that go with calling oneself a health care professional.
2. Credentialing is a State function that may take one or more of the following forms (i.e., use of national exams as basis to grant State licensure):
 - a. Registration or certification—The process by which an agency or association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency (common method used in medicine, nursing and allied health).
 - b. Protects the public from incompetence and provides for professional identification.
 - c. Licensure—The process by which a governmental agency grants permission to an individual to engage in a given occupation upon finding that the applicant has attained the minimal degree of competency necessary to ensure that the public will be reasonably protected.
3. Current State statutes and/or other pertinent information on the lead State EMS agency governing ALS.
4. It is legally essential to attain and maintain certification/registration under State law as long as one works as an EMT-I.

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While over 30 additional levels of EMT's exist in the U.S., only EMT-I described in #2 is nationally recognized.

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5. Definitions
 - a. Recertification/relicensure—The process by which an individual's technical competency is periodically reaffirmed.
 - b. Reciprocity—The mutual exchange of privileges or licenses by two certifying agencies.
6. Current State/national continuing education requirements or EMT-I recertification/relicensure.
7. Continuing education is important because:
 - a. A lot of the skill and knowledge learned in the course may not be used with great frequency. Skill decay can occur very quickly.
 - b. The public and medical community need to be continually assured that quality patient care is being delivered.
 - c. It is a basis for reciprocity among many States that can allow for the potential advantages of vertical and horizontal mobility.
 - d. New knowledge, skills, and equipment will continue to be a part of this relatively new profession.
8. The major purposes of a national association include:
 - a. To develop models of required competencies for various roles in the profession.
 - b. To provide learning experiences to help EMT's acquire the skills of self-directed learning and to help instructors acquire the necessary skills as facilitators of learning.
 - c. To stimulate and/or provide the development of study programs, workshops, in-service programs, multi-media packages, and other learning resources accessible to all EMT's.
 - d. To instill awareness among its members regarding the need for continuing professional development and to reward self-development efforts.
 - e. To assure that its members are engaging in continuing professional development, preferably voluntarily but under compulsion if necessary, and
 - f. To inform its members about modern concepts of adult learning and to apply those concepts in its own educational activity.
9. The major purposes of a national registration agency include:
 - a. To promote the improved delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by:
 - i. Assisting in the development and evaluation of educational programs to train EMT-I's.
 - ii. Establishing qualifications for eligibility to apply for registration.
 - iii. Preparing and conducting examinations designed to assure the competency of EMT-I.
 - iv. Establishing a system for re-registration.
 - v. Establishing procedures for revocation of certificates of registration for cause.
 - vi. Maintaining a directory of registered Emergency Medical Technicians-Intermediate.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

States have different
continuing education
requirements for
recertification/relicensure.

Handouts

- b. To develop guidelines and programs to assist individuals who have completed Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate programs to raise their level of competence to assure the provision of improved emergency medical services, and
 - c. To do any and all things necessary or desirable for the attainment of the stated purposes.
- 10. Major benefits of subscribing to professional journals include:
 - a. They are a source of continuing education.
 - b. They provide an opportunity for the EMT-I to publish articles.
 - c. They are an informational source whereby EMT-I's can learn about other local, State, regional, or national advancements and/or issues.
 - d. They encourage professional growth and awareness.
- 11. The benefits of EMT-I's teaching in their community include:
 - a. It can be a source of continuing education credit.
 - b. It can provide a review of material and/or skills not commonly used in the field.
 - c. Setting up the EMT-I as a leader and resource person in his community.
 - d. It can fill a much needed void in having BLS and/or Basic Cardiac Life Support qualified individuals trained in the community.
 - e. Providing supervision, direction and evaluation of student EMT-I's during their field internship.

Appendix A.

**Oath of Geneva
Code of Ethics
EMT Oath**

The Oath of Geneva, drafted by the World Medical Association in 1948, provides a good example. It is the oath taken by many medical students upon completion of their studies, at the time of being admitted to the medical profession.

I solemnly pledge myself to consecrate my life to the service of humanity; I will give to my teachers the respect and gratitude which is their due; I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity; the health of my patient will be my first consideration; I will respect the secrets which are confided in me; I will maintain by all the means in my power the honor and noble traditions of the medical profession; my colleagues will be my brothers; I will not permit considerations of religion, nationality, race, party, politics, or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient; I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception; even under threat, I will not make use of my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity. I make these promises solemnly, freely and upon my honor.

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMT'S

Professional status as an Emergency Medical Technician and Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate is maintained and enriched by the willingness of the individual practitioner to accept and fulfill obligations to society, other medical professionals, and the profession of Emergency Medical Technician. As an Emergency Medical Technician at the basic level or an Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate, I solemnly pledge myself to the following code of ethics.

A fundamental responsibility of the Emergency Medical Technician is to conserve life, to alleviate suffering, to promote health, to do no harm, and to encourage the quality and equal availability of emergency medical care. The Emergency Medical Technician provides services based on human need with respect for human dignity, unrestricted by considerations of nationality, race, creed, color, or status.

The Emergency Medical Technician does not use professional knowledge and skills in any enterprise detrimental to the public well-being.

The Emergency Medical Technician respects and holds in confidence all information of a confidential nature obtained in the course of professional work unless required by law to divulge such information.

The Emergency Medical Technician, as a citizen, understands and upholds the law and performs the duties of citizenship. As a professional, the Emergency Medical Technician has the never ending responsibility to work with concerned citizens and other health care professionals in promoting a high standard of emergency medical care to all people.

The Emergency Medical Technician shall maintain professional competence and demonstrate concern for the competence of other members of the Emergency Medical Services health care team.

An Emergency Medical Technician assumes responsibility for individual professional actions and judgement, both in dependent and independent emergency functions, and knows and upholds the laws which affect the practice of the Emergency Medical Technician.

An Emergency Medical Technician has the responsibility to be aware of and participate in, matters of legislation affecting the Emergency Medical Technician and the Emergency Medical Services System.

The Emergency Medical Technician adheres to standards of personal ethics which reflect credit upon the profession.

Emergency Medical Technicians, or groups of Emergency Medical Technicians, who advertise professional services, do so in conformity with the dignity of the profession.

The Emergency Medical Technician has an obligation to protect the public by not delegating to a person, less qualified, any service which requires the professional competence of an Emergency Medical Technician.

The Emergency Medical Technician will work harmoniously with, and sustain confidence in Emergency Medical Technician associates, the nurse, the physician, and other members of the emergency medical services health care team.

The Emergency Medical Technician refuses to participate in unethical procedures, and assumes the responsibility to expose incompetence or unethical conduct of others to the appropriate authority in a proper and professional manner.

THE EMT OATH

Be it pledged as an Emergency Medical Technician, I will honor the physical and judicial laws of God and man. I will follow that regimen which, according to my ability and judgement, I consider for the benefit of my patients and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, nor shall I suggest any such counsel. Into whatever homes I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of only the sick and injured, never revealing what I see or hear in the lives of men.

I shall also share my medical knowledge with those who may benefit from what I have learned. I will serve unselfishly and continuously in order to help make a better world for all mankind.

While I continue to keep this oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life, and the practice of the art, respected by all men, in all times. Should I trespass or violate this oath, may the reverse be my lot. So help me God.

Charles Gillespie, M.D.